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# THE LIFE STRUCTURE OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE IN ITS HISTORICAL ASPECTS

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## THE LIFE STRUCTURE OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE IN ITS HISTORICAL ASPECTS

*By* YASUZŌ HORIE

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### I. THE FAMILY-LIKE STRUCTURE OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE

We do not know too much about conditions in primitive times, but ever since the establishment of the Yamato Court the Japanese have carried on a national life organized on a family basis. Duty towards the Emperor, who was at the center and pinnacle, that is the ruler-subject status, was bound up with the vertical parent-child relationship. This vertical relationship was not only the same in every period of history, but it is really a historical relationship in the sense that the same relationship descended in actual fact from generation to generation. Specifically, the belief, or historical fact, that Amaterasu-ōmikami was the ancestress of the Emperor and that our ancestor-gods are related in some degree or other to Amaterasu-ōmikami has down to this very day constituted the strongest unifying bond in our national life. In other words, our national life was nothing more than family life on a national scale.

This relationship of unity based upon the family has its origin in the ancient clan system. The clan is a group composed of persons who either have descended from a common ancestor or believe them-

selves to have done so. It is a unit established in primitive groups in response to the development of productive relationships and marriage relationships. It is organized on the basis of blood affinity. When it is felt that the blood relationship exists not only among the living members but extends also to both the ancestors and the descendants of the group, then ancestor worship is instituted and the ancestor-god or patron god becomes the focal point for all the activities of the clan. The ancient society of our country, as it has been reconstructed on the basis of the ancient chronicles (the "*Kojiki*" and the "*Nippon-shoki*"), was a clan society of this type. Order was maintained and the group controlled either by the norms of the group or by the commands of the *uji-no-kami* (clan leader), who acted under the inspiration of the *ujigami* (the patron god of the clan). The clan leader had charge of the religious celebrations connected with the patron god. As the supporter of the norms, he naturally exercised an absolute power over the members of the clan. This position was transmitted on a hereditary basis because it was thought that only the descendants of the clan leader could be inspired by the patron god.

The possessor of authority had as symbols of his power such sacred regalia as mirrors and *magatama* (comma-shaped beads). Later on the sword was added as the symbol of military power. It had become difficult to govern on the basis of divine will and of the magic power of the clan leader, so military power had had to be joined to these. If we regard the stage where control is exercised on the basis of blood alone as the ideal stage of the clan system, then the stage in which the clan leader controls the group through magic power, with the wishes of the ancestor-god in the background, already shows the clan system in a period of deterioration. When it reaches the point where it is no longer possible to support power by magic alone and military strength is added, then the clan system has really collapsed. Conditions in our country in the pre-Taika Reform period, as the ancient chronicles show them, reveal the clan system in a state of disintegration.<sup>1)</sup> However, the process by which this was brought about was at the same time one in which the weaker clans were absorbed by the stronger clans. Through the Taika Reform there was brought to perfection that family-like organization of the nation which had as its highest point and center the Emperor.

Instead of adding a learned annotation on the family-like structure of life, I will explain in simple terms customary family life. In the

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<sup>1)</sup> Dr. M. Takigawa; *Nippon Shakaishi* (Social History of Japan), 1929, pp. 5. ff.

West, the family has already become in the main the conjugal type. When the children grow-up and marry, they leave the parents' home and set up their own households. There is no inheritance of the headship of the family. In contrast to this, the Japanese family was based, through the agency of the ancestor-god, upon a vertical relationship between parent and child, and thus between ancestors and their posterity. The husband, who was the head of the household, was also its center. With him in the household lived his wife, their children, his retired parents, possibly his brothers and sisters, and at times his uncles and aunts. The whole life of the household was subject to the control of the head. The heir of the household grew up and inherited the family as well as the powers of the head of the household. These conditions constituted the distinctive features of our family system. The head of the household was not simply head of the family in the usual sense. He was really the head of the family as the currently existing manifestation of the ancestor-god. Consequently, the members of the family were not subjected to the control of a mere head of the family. They were under the control of the family itself as embodied in the head of the family. Furthermore, even the head of the family himself did not live for his own ends, but managed the household affairs in the interests of the family. Thus both the head and the members of the family submerged themselves in the family and the individual personality did not appear.

It is in the Tokugawa Period that this type of relationship is to be seen the most clearly and the most widely diffused throughout society. If we look at the family constitutions of the rich merchants of that time, we find many in which appear the phrase "Nothing other than the traditional business will be engaged in", or the phrase "It is prohibited to change the business." There were some families whose constitution consisted only of the three words "Continue without change." In short, it was usual to hold fast to the ancestral business and prohibit change. The position of the head of the family was passed on from father to son like the baton in a relay race. This state of affairs was not limited to the merchant families alone, but was also found in agricultural and artisan families. In military families it was even stricter. It is thought that the family life and the family ideals of the *samurai* family strengthened those of the agricultural, artisan, and merchant families.

Of course, this type of family life, especially the prohibition on the separation of the family business from the family, was abolished as a

system with the Meiji Restoration, and distinctions as to social rank were no longer made on the basis of family status or family business. Moreover, the rights in civil law of the head of the household had to a great extent lost their substance. Yet, there were everywhere to be seen habitual actions in which family life still preserved the old state of affairs. This was especially marked in the so-called old families or in the plutocracy. Of course, this springs from their not being able to extricate themselves from tradition. Still, it must not be overlooked that the Meiji Civil Code not only checked the abandonment of tradition but in some cases actually strengthened tradition. Since the Civil Code adopted the feudalistic family system as a basic principle, the ideal of the feudalistic family system was given a legal basis, thus being strongly and firmly preserved. The whole life of the nation was invested with a feudalistic character.

Family life such as has been described, raised to a national scale and widened in its scope to include the whole of the nation, was the national life of our country. Not only were they both externally alike but, as explained previously, through the agency of the ancestor-god they existed in a relationship of close internal union. Accordingly, acquiring skill in family living amounted to the same thing as acquiring skill in national living. The converse was also true. In short, we have managed our national life down to this very day in accordance with the historical tradition of becoming habituated to a national life under the principle of nationalism (*kokka*, i. e. nation-family). A national life possessing this kind of family-like organization has throughout our history consistently structured the life of the whole nation. Therefore, the Emperor was not a mere sovereign. He was the center and pinnacle of a structure of national life which possessed an historical tradition. In this sense his position differs in its nature from those of the various European rulers who by virtue of their actual strength rose out of a host of feudal lords to the position of king. Even in European countries it was the ideal of the king to become the Holy Roman Emperor, that is the ruler possessed of the highest sanction from Jehovah. It was thought that the king's special right and highest duty was the "defence of the faith." This and the governance of the people were asserted to be inseparable duties. However, the king was originally nothing more than a feudal lord, and the indivisibility of "defense of the faith" and governance of the people, that is the union of Church and State, could be carried off no matter who succeeded to the position of king. In Japan the Emperor was not the highest feudal lord.

Actually, he stood outside the feudal system. The ruler-subject relationship which existed between the Emperor and the Shōgun was not a lord-vassal relationship. As a result, though as the feudal system developed the Court lost its political rights, still the Shōgun was not able to escape from the fundamental fact that his right to govern arose from his position as the representative of the Emperor. Thus whenever the feudal system crumbled it naturally came about that the right to rule was returned to the Emperor.<sup>2)</sup> The Meiji Restoration is the most outstanding example of this. In Japan the union of Church and State could not have been carried out other than through the agency of the Emperor.

Thus while Japan may be classified as an Oriental country, the structure of its national life differs from that of China and India. When contact with Western civilization was established about the middle of the last century, Japan alone was able to introduce it effectively and modernize. It is thought that it was Japan's structure of life which greatly contributed to this. In order for Japan to avoid being turned into a colony of the more advanced countries and in order to raise Japan to a position of equality with them, it was of vital importance that the nation's power be increased. Our structure of life was highly suitable for concentrating the strength of the people upon this task. However, as I shall explain, with the development of an urban way of life, the traditional way of life became impossible to maintain without change. The contradictions between a national way of life based on urban social relations and a family-like national way of life have been unexpectedly revealed by our recent defeat. This opportunity demands a formal and substantive change in the structure of our national life.

## II. THE STRUCTURE OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE AND THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

If we are to consider historically the family-like structure of national life which I have described in the preceding section, we must investigate the role and position of the village community. The village has continued its prescribed existence in the whole life of the people and has formed the basic organization in every period of history. Despite political and economic changes, it has always been the underlying structure. In this section I will discuss this point, basing my conclusions upon the research of advanced scholars.

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<sup>2)</sup> Dr. K. Maki; *Nippon Hōseishi Gairon* (An Outline of Legislation History of Japan). 1935. p. 185.

In accordance with the usual evolutionary pattern of the kinship group being followed by the territorial group, our villages were formed by the clans settling down in fixed locations. Japan skipped the pastoral stage and went immediately from a collectivist economy to an agricultural economy. As revealed by the shell mound remains, even in the collectivist stage a settled life had been entered upon to a certain extent. The geographical environment made a nomad life difficult or at least severely circumscribed the scope of the wandering. Consequently, it is thought about the time that the clan settled down as a village group it split into families. At the time of the Taika Reform these families were the so-called *gōko* (郷戸) (collective of small families). These *gōko* were made the structural unit of the villages which were then founded. However, there was a tendency for the *gōko*'s elements, the *bōko* (房戸) (constituent family of *gōko*), also to gradually become independent and to be made the structural unit. Each *bōko* had its own head of the family, but as a rule the head of the main family occupied the position of head of the *gōko*. This position was inherited by the eldest son. About twenty or thirty of these *gōko* were grouped together to form a village. In the villages there were village heads. The more powerful of these village heads controlled several villages and as *uji-no-kami* (clan leader) preserved the memory of the clan system.

With the transformation of the clan group into a village group and with the gradual intensification of agricultural operations, the family basis of village unity was gradually weakened. However, this development did not destroy the corporate nature of the village. While the intensification of agricultural operations meant that the family replaced the village as the economic unit, still it was a strong bond contributing to the unity of the family on the village level. From the first, the water control necessary in a paddy culture had required neighboring farmers to cooperate with one another. Paddy culture itself resulted in the taking up of permanent residence on the land. As a result, the marriage area was circumscribed and a blood relationship was superimposed upon a territorial relationship. Of necessity, the Japanese villages were subjected to geographical and social conditions which strengthened their solidarity.<sup>3)</sup> The village unity which centered around worship of the *ujigami* (clan gods) or *ubusunagami* (gods of a birth place) added to this solidarity and continually supported the corporate

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<sup>3)</sup> Eitaro Suzuki; *Wagakuni ni okeru Nōson-shakaishūdan no chiikisei ni tsuite* (On the Territorial Character of the Village Communities in Japan). ("Kazoku to Sonraku". No. 1, 1939. p. 8)



character of the village. The worship of *ujigami* originally arose out of the cooperative life of the clan. But once it had been established, the consciousness of internal unity which was based upon faith in the clan-god took precedence over the kinship organization of the clan system.<sup>4)</sup> The same thing happened in the case of *ubusunagami*. This state of affairs has endured right down to modern times. While the village split up into families, it did not lose its corporative character, that is, it remained a communal village. This communal village was placed under the fifty-household *ri* (里) which was established as the administrative unit by the Taika Reform. When in the early Nara Period there was another reform and the *gō-ri* system (郷里制) was adopted, the village was called *ri*. Then with the establishment of the manors it once more appeared as the village.<sup>5)</sup> Thus in the period of the manorial economy the village, either singly or in combination with other villages, constituted the manorial estate controlled by a lord of the manor. When Japan entered the feudal period, the feudal lords, who were organizing regional economies, made the village an administrative unit.

During the transition from the manorial period to the feudal period, in addition to the principle of unity arising from the geographical, social, and religious causes which I have already explained, there appeared village compacts which formally bound the villagers into one. It is thought that village compacts had existed before this but that they had not been reduced to written form. Although written compacts had not existed, the village had been able to maintain its corporate character. The compacts were probably put into written form as a result of the development of various conditions which rendered such a course necessary, e.g. the increase in complexity of relations with the feudal lord or with other villages. During the process of reducing the village's compact to a written form there arose the ideal of "the whole village" (*sōmura* 総村). Since the group ideas of all the farmers constituted the consciousness of the village and since the group activity of all the farmers was the activity of the village, then the requirements of the group life of the farmers was the origin of the establishment of "the whole village." According to Dr. Maki, these "whole villages" were ones which in the period when the manorial system had disintegrated but

<sup>4)</sup> Dr. N. Nishida; *Nippon Shakai Shichō* (Trend of Social Thought in Japan). (Iwanami's "Sekai Shichō", vol. 11, 1930. p. 59.)

<sup>5)</sup> Mitsuo Shimidzu; *Nippon Chūsei no Sonraku* (Villages in the Medieval Japan). 1942, pp. 87. ff.

the feudal domains had not yet been consolidated—that is the period when the protection of neither the lord of the manor nor the *daimyō* (feudal chief) could be relied upon, had split off from the manor in order to defend themselves by tightening up their solidarity. This splitting off made gradual headway during the Yoshino and Muromachi Periods and reached its fruition in the Sengoku Period.<sup>6)</sup> When written village compacts came into being and the “whole village” ideal arose, character of the village assembly as a deliberative organ and of the the *osabyakushō* (長百姓), *otonabyakushō* (オトナ百姓), *toshiyori* (年寄), *wakashū* (若衆), etc. as executive organs became clear. It became frequent for the village itself to negotiate with the feudal lord or with other villages. It is to be especially noted that the village assumed the character of a military group. The peasant revolts of the Muromachi Period, *do-ikki* (土一揆) or *kuni-ikki* (國一揆), are nothing but the externalization of this military character.

Thus the village acquired self-government. The self-governing city of the late medieval period was the special social group in which this spirit and organization of self-government appeared. The village, which had developed autonomously, was constrained, during the course of the separation of the peasantry and military which occurred when the feudal system was reorganized at the end of the Muromachi Period, to submit to the control of the irresistibly strong feudal lords. As an administrative village its autonomy, solidarity and corporateness were strengthened. That these things were strengthened in the village to a greater extent than in the city, which also had become an administrative unit, is perhaps to be credited to the fact that the village people were all engaged in agriculture (homogeneity of economic activity), that their agriculture did not go beyond intensive operations set in a framework of small family farms (stationary level of production), that contact with the outside world and migration were very infrequent (forced isolation), that the Shogunate and the feudal lords always made the land economy the foundation of their existence. In the Meiji Period the character of the village as an administrative unit was further strengthened by the various administrative measures which were adopted in order to uniformly accommodate the whole country to the new town-village system and to the new economic organization. Not only that, but because of its immature state the Japanese capitalistic economy, required the development of agriculture as its principal base. Consequently, the rural village was obliged to continue its timehonoured community life.

6) Dr. K. Maki; *Chūsei Makki ni okeru Sōmura Kannen no Seiritsu* (Rise of the “whole village” idea in the late Medieval Period). (“*Keizaishi Kenkyū*”, vol. 16, No. 1, 1936.)

Since its establishment the village has undergone many changes in its political and economic relations, but it has remained unchanged in spite of this. The important fact which can be elicited is that "the Japanese village is a family-racial-territorial group situated on a fixed ancestral piece of land and united around rituals for the clan god."<sup>7</sup> The village, whose structural unit is a patriarchal-type family, itself possesses a family-like structure, and it is the worship of the clan god which constitutes the core of its consanguinal and territorial unity. Moreover, those gods are all related to the Emperor's ancestor-god, Amaterasu-ōmikami. Consequently, even though classes had developed in the village, the parent-child relationship survived strongly in relations between the village headman and other villagers. Even though a feudal lord had ruled over the village, the relations between the lord and his subjects were not entirely to be explained in terms of exploitation.

In this way the village not only had its own family-like structure, but in the sense that it played the most important mediating role in uniting the family unit to the national community, it really must be characterized as the basic structure in the life of the nation. The feudal system can be said to have rested upon a status-type relationship of unity between the lord and his subjects. If the village organization is excluded, it is impossible to understand the phenomenon of the feudal system in its entirety. When we consider the problem in this light, it can be grasped that while the basic structural units of Japanese national life are equally the family and the village, its structure is quite different both from Chinese society, in which the village is not always of family-like structure nor the natural village always identical with the administrative village, and from Western society, in which the basic structural unit has already been reduced to the individual.

### III. THE STRUCTURE OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE AND THE FEUDAL SYSTEM

I have already explained that our national life has come down to the present day as an historical and traditional entity in that it is formed on the basis of a village which also possesses a family-like structure. It is necessary next to take a glance at the feudal system, an institution which has played a similar role. In the final analysis, the feudal system had the village for its base. Furthermore, it contributed greatly to the preservation of the family tradition of the

<sup>7</sup> Yasoji Kazahaya; Explanatory note for the "Zenkoku Minji Kanrei Ruishu." 1942. p.7.

village organization. The feudal system itself was never distinct from the family system and the national organization. Life under the feudal lord was both an expanded family life and a contracted national life. Briefly, the feudal system was nothing more than the feudal manifestation of the family-like structure of our national life. If we follow the Japanese feudal system through the process of its rise, development, and decline and compare it with the feudal system of Western Europe, the points of difference which must be cited in connection with the present problem are that in Japan: (1) The control of the feudal lord was so powerful as to be almost absolute, (2) The growth of urban society was deformed, (3) The contribution of the above two points to the maintenance of the traditional structure of national life is very large, and, as explained above, the feudal system is only the feudal manifestation of the structure of our national life.

The absolute power of the feudal lord, mentioned as the first point, arose out of the formative process of the feudal system. In Western Europe the lord of the manor changed into the feudal lord. But in Japan the feudal lord displaced the lord of the manor. Since the position of the feudal lord had not been occupied in accordance with any established rules but had been seized on a basis of actual power, the power of the lord became absolute. In addition, while the society of Western Europe was to some extent pervaded by the ideals of Roman Law, Japan inherited Chinese law, which was based on Confucianism. This law operated hand in hand with Buddhism to wholly emphasize the power of the ruler. It taught that the duty of the retainer to obey was no light matter. In this way it strengthened the control of the feudal lord ideologically. Of course, it must not be overlooked that the structure of our national life in itself brought such concepts clearly to the surface out of the general body of Confucianist and Buddhist thought.

In a feudal system of this character it was a very serious matter to seek service with a lord. On occasions it was not at all unusual to require the sacrifice of a person or a family. On the other hand, it may be that in the father-like attitude which the lord had towards his retainers and subjects there was something warmer than we find in Europe. While consciousness of the permanency of status was deepening, there were also being established in this feudal period the ideals of "selfless public service" (*messi-hōko* 滅私奉公), and "loyalty and patriotism" (*jinchū-hōkoku* 盡忠報國 or *chūkun-aikoku* 忠君愛國). These ideals drew their theoretical framework from the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism. They played an important role in strengthen-

ing in family life the moral principle of filial piety and in national life the moral principle of loyalty. They thereby left no room for change in the traditional structure of national life or the ideals of a family-like life.

I will leave the second point for consideration in the next section and here take up the third point. According to Dr. Takigawa, the entities which are designated in the medieval military tales as *ikka*, *ichimon*, *ichizoku*, and so on, (all of which mean family, clan, household, kinsmen) are consanguinal groups resembling the ancient clans. He says, "Because of the necessities of the period the ancient clan system was revived among the newly arisen *samurai* class. Those entities which in the military chronicles of the period are called *ikka* (一家), *ichimon* (一門), *ichizoku* (一族), *ichirui* (一類), *ichiryū* (一流), *kamon* (家門), *monyō* (門葉), etc., are consanguinal groups resembling the ancient clans. However, the clans of this period are not clans controlled by religious observances dedicated to a clan god. They are clans ruled by means of the right of the leader of the main branch of the family to assume military command of the clan. The revival of this type of clan system among the *samurai* class came about because it was necessary to the *samurai's* way of life that a tightly-knit group based on blood affinity be created."<sup>8)</sup>

The ancient clan had changed from a group controlled on the basis of a simple blood relationship to a group controlled by the divinely backed magical powers of the clan leader, with military power being added later. At the time of the Taika Reform it was eliminated from the political structure. But, while the influential clan leaders were appointed to important offices in the central government, the minor clan leaders, who had previously been appointed *kuni-no-miyatsuko* (國造) or *agatanushi* (縣主) (district governor before the Taika Reform), again filled such local offices as *gunji* (郡司) (local district governor after the Taika Reform). Even those who received no such offices were still honored as the chief men of the clan. As influential local families, these minor clan leaders continued to possess latent power. They not only retained their relationship with their old followers but even entered into a clan-like or master-retainer relationship with the new settlers. Because of the fact that the Japanese feudal system was organized chiefly by the descendants of these minor clan leaders, it is to be easily understood why the medieval military family groups appeared as consanguinal groups resembling the ancient clans. Further-

<sup>8)</sup> Dr. M. Takigawa; Nippon Hoseishi (Legislation History of Japan). 1928. p. 348.

more, as Dr. Takigawa has explained, military power came to occupy the key position as the principle of union and control. It can be said, indeed, that the principle of control sifted from worship of the ancestor-god to the right of military command. Still ancestor-worship was of great significance in the strengthening and maintaining of political control. For example, Tokugawa Ieyasu was revered as an ancestor-god by being enshrined in the Tōshōgū Shrine and by being styled *Shinkun* (神君). His last instruction was treated as the highest political norm all through the Tokugawa Period.

The appearance of the military family as a developmental form of what must be regarded as the archetypal structure of our national life and the organization of the feudal system with them as its core shows that life under the feudal system was only one type of family-like national life. It strengthened the traditional structure of national life which had been the matrix out of which it was born. The feudal system lasted for seven hundred years and in that time it penetrated into the political, social, economic, moral and other fields of life. This penetration was particularly great in the Tokugawa Period. It spread throughout the entire national life both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the political field, there was perfected a monolithic hierarchy with the Shōgun at the summit, and thereby the political life of the whole country was unified. In the field of economy, there arose a nation-wide economy which centered around the Shōgun's domain and which included the domanical economies of the various *daimyo* but transcended them. It was on such an economic structure that the political form described above was based. In addition, Confucianist learning, which was developed as theoretical backing for the feudal system, was not confined to the military classes alone but spread as a principle of life and of morals to the farmers, artisans and merchants. The *samurai's* way of life became a model for all classes. This is plainly shown by the use throughout the country of the military class's style of writing and penmanship.

In short, in the Tokugawa Period people were divided into the four classes and then further fixed according to their status, family rank, family business, etc. There was no longer any opportunity for the humble to rise to high positions such as there had briefly been in the Sengoku Period (the period of civil war which preceded the Tokugawa Period).

Thus the feudal system, which appeared as one type of our traditional structure of national life, strengthened and deepened that struc-

ture and even appeared to have become the whole of the national life. The feudal system bore a close, internal relation to the structure of our national life. Given the role it played in strengthening that life, it must be regarded as natural that even though in the Meiji Restoration the feudal system was discarded, the various feudal relationships which had penetrated the life of the people could not easily be eliminated. Even after the Restoration the ideals of national and family life which had been strengthened under the feudal system were retained. Not only that, but through various legislation, policies and educational procedures they were even more accentuated among the people. With the development of a capitalist economy there also gradually arose urban social relations and ideas. However, these were to be thought of as playing a secondary role to national life and family life, especially as far as the former was concerned. Our traditional structure of national life did not lose its strong tradition.

#### IV. THE DEFORMED DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN SOCIETY

In what form did urban society develop in the midst of a national life which throughout the history of our country has consistently possessed a family-like structure?

Both national life and family life are thought of as community life (*Gemeinschaft*). Community life is life in the nation and family, that is in social groups based on a relationship of emotional union and harmony. Urban society (*Gesellschaft*), on the other hand, is a livelihood group formed in order to obtain advantages and it is based upon voluntary cooperation. The latter type of society is formed out of the developmentally prior communal society. To explain briefly the process of its rise; a man is cast into the cold world from the warm, isolated social unit of the communal society. He focuses exclusively upon his own existence, that is upon the individual. While this individual feels tense toward other people, at the same time he recognizes other people's positions and points of view, and he cooperates with them in an understanding way. In this way, urban society arises. He left the warm communal society and set himself adrift in the cold world because, judging from historical fact, it had become impossible for him to carry on a full life within the narrow communal society. For instance, its origin is found in such occurrences as second and third sons (dependent members of a family) leaving their family because it had become impossible for them to earn a livelihood within its bounds, or in farmers running away from the village community because they

were no longer able to endure the exactions of the feudal lord. Afterwards it was the usual course, both in the Orient and the Occident, for them to become either brigands or wandering merchants. Brigandage and commerce are both born from the same womb. It is well established that in the beginning they were frequently associated with one another.

Urban society in its rise centered around economic transactions by individuals. The exchange relation based upon division of work is the pivotal point of its development. It may be safely said that the non-economic social relations arose from this or were added to it. Oppenheimer has said that to get something by working oneself or by exchanging an equal value of one's own labor is to satisfy one's desire through "economic means." On this basis he has constructed his general theory of urban society. On the other hand, he said that to seize other's labor without compensation was to satisfy one's desire through "political means." On this basis he constructed his general theory of the state.<sup>9)</sup> Life in a *gesellschaft* society, in contradistinction to family or national life, is a life of horizontal relationships. Using, in the main, economic procedures families bargain in a position of equality with other families, or individual bargain with other individuals.

Consequently *gesellschaft* social relations appear with the beginning of economic life under horizontal relationships. It is a well known fact that in Western Europe the guilds were first organized among wandering merchants. The town society which developed where they settled down may appear to be a communal society when compared to the modern city, but when compared with the village community is clearly an urban society. In the process of developing the industry and commerce which were based upon these cities, Europeans, who in the form of the Renaissance and the Reformation had discovered the "individual", eventually discovered "society" during the 18th and 19th century democratic revolutions against absolutism.

In Japan "society" has not yet been discovered.

In the examination of the process by which Japan has reached the present point, I will first take up commerce and industry. It was in the latter part of the period of the manorial economy that the equivalent exchange of labor or commodities came to have a fair amount of importance for daily life. As an index of this, it is possible to cite the rise of local markets which were held for a fixed date at a designated place. Producers, who immediately on the conclusion of their exchange

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<sup>9)</sup> Franz Oppenheimer; *The state*. tr. by J. M. Gitterman. 1922. pp.24. ff.



became consumers, were not the only people who came to the market. Peddlers also participated in it. The exchange area which centered around each market was not necessarily identical with the area of the manor. Among Japanese manors there were some large ones which included several villages, but small manors which only consisted of a portion of one village were not of infrequent occurrence. On the whole, the general tendency was for economic transactions, *pari passu* with the development of exchange, to spread beyond the confines of the manor.

The noble class and religious institutions who comprised the lords of the manor desired the development of this exchange economy. Their lands were gradually being filched by the military class and they were no longer able to depend for their needs on the income from these lands. As a result they had been placed in the position of having to seek other sources of income to replace those they had lost. They fixed their attention upon the exchange economy. They emancipated artisans and other members of their self-sufficient house-holds and had them form specially privileged groups called *za* (座). They also gave monopolistic privileges to newly formed groups of merchants and artisans. They then lived on the fees which they charged for these special privileges. From the Yoshino Period on these measures gradually became more widespread. Those were the days when the military class had just about completed their gobbling up of the manors.

Under the protection of religious institutions and nobles who had lost their landed economic base the exchange economy developed, and the merchants and artisans matured. With their maturity, however, they began to dislike being cramped within the narrow confines of the manor. They felt the control of the lord of the manor to be restrictive. They wanted to escape from it and to seek a wider scope for their activities as well as a control and protection based upon a stronger power. The response to this want was the *daimyō* (feudal lords) who, overthrowing the lords of the manor, now first appeared. With their coming there arose a domanial economy, the scope of which often included several provinces. The castle-town was the nerve center of this domanial economy. The domanial economy constituted the economic side of the decentralized feudal system.

On becoming mature the commerce and industry which had developed under the control and protection of the *daimyō* once again began to feel constrained. Oda Nobunaga perceived this point very clearly. His system of *raku-ici* (樂市) (free markets) *raku-za* (樂座) (emanci-

pation from *za*) and his abolition of tolls was a response to the demands of the artisans and traders for liberation from medieval shackles. Nobunaga's seemingly liberal policy was not really aimed at securing freedom to industry and commerce. The principal object he had in view was to control commerce and industry on a nation-wide scale as a means to obtaining national political unity. When we keep this in mind, it is easily grasped that there never really was any contradiction involved between his *raku-ichi-raku-za* policy and his repressive policy toward self-governing cities like Sakai. Nobunaga's ideals were inherited by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu. In the Tokugawa Period they were brought to fruition. Commerce and industry were permitted to develop but only under the control of the Shogunate and within the narrow territory of a Japan closed to foreign intercourse.

To sum up, Japanese industry and commerce has developed in each period of its history under the control and protection of the person who in that particular period held politico-social power, namely: in the first period, the lord of the manor; in the second period, the various medieval *daimyo*; and in the third period, the unifier of the country. This is one of the important features of Japan's historical development. The other side of this phenomenon was that the cities, which were the bases for commerce and industry and which were the social groupings of the artisans and merchants, were, unlike the towns of Western Europe, never given the opportunity to seize the right of self-government. Next, I would like to touch lightly upon the development of the cities.

From ancient times there have been cities in Japan. Nara and Kyoto were established as capitals of a powerful centralized state. When Japan entered the period of the manorial economy, these cities became residential areas for the lords of the manor. The vast subsistence economy managed by the lords of the manor supported the officials and artisans belonging to their households. The annual rents collected from the scattered manors were sent to the place where the lord of the manor lived. Along the routes used for relaying this grain tribute, there arose towns. With the development of an exchange economy these towns began to escape from the control of the lord of the manor and gradually to become independent. This tendency was particularly marked from the Yoshino Period on. Next, the castle-town appeared. As the power of the various *daimyo* grew great, they sheltered many retainers beneath the walls of their castles. In addition to this, in order to provide for the supply of the necessities of life and the implements of war, the *daimyo* gathered in the vicinity of their

citadels merchants and artisans charged with the manufacture and supply of these things. Consequently, the castle-town had the appearance of a commercial and industrial city. Moreover, for various other reasons, there appeared cities such as temple towns, post towns, etc. With the Tokugawa Period one stage of development was completed. All these cities were centers of commerce and industry as well as centers for the supply of foodstuffs. They formed settlements which in their nature differed wholly from agricultural villages. They were considered to be cities not merely because they possessed these external and functional characteristics, but also because they had a unifying formative principle different from that of the agricultural village. They were unified politico-economic bodies having the nature of an urban society.

A unified politico-economic body with the nature of an urban society here indicates the autonomy of the city. In the period of the manorial economy, the city, as a part of the manorial estate, was directly controlled by bailiff of the manor. With the growth of the power of the *daimyo*, they entered under his control. In between these two stages, with the rise of commerce and the growth of the power of the town dwellers the administrative rights of the city gradually passed into the hands of the wealthy bourgeoisie. The city attempted to become a unified, separate, autonomous body. Uji-Yamada, Ōminato, Sakai, Hakata were the outstanding examples of this. The substance of their autonomy was not always clear, but administrative rights were definitely included and to a certain extent judicial rights also. It is assumed that they had the right to levy taxes and the police power. In some degree special rights were held with regard to coinage as well as weights and measures.<sup>10)</sup> There were also some cities which, like Sakai, possessed military forces and resisted the feudal lords. The legislative and executive aspects of city administration reflected those of the farm villages. Affluent burgers known variously as *otona* (オトナ), *toshiyori* (年寄), *rōwaka* (老若), etc. undertook to perform these functions. The *nayashū* (納屋衆) and *sanjurokuninshū* (三十六人衆) at Sakai and the *egōshū* (会合衆) at Uji-Yamada and Ōminato were the most famous of these. In brief, in the self-governing cities found in Japan at the end of the middle ages, there were institutions which resembled those of the patrician ruled cities of Western Europe.

However, not only was further development along these lines

<sup>10)</sup> Takeshi Toyoda ; Chūsei Nippon Shōgyōshi no Kenkyū (A Study upon Medieval Commerce of Japan). 1944. pp.291. ff.

prevented by the powerful concentration of feudal control, but the cities retrogressed and became administrative units of the feudal system just as had the agricultural villages. Of course, this was the concomitant to the subjection of the traders and artisans to the feudal lord's control which I have already described.

To sum up, commerce, which was the motivating force in the formation of urban society, developed under the protection and control of the feudal lords. It was permitted to mature only in so far as it ministered to them. The traders and artisans, who were the active agents in urban society, were not permitted to escape beyond the control of the feudal lords. In the Tokugawa Period especially there was no scope for the development of talent unless one were the parasite of a feudal lord. So in the end the cities, which were the nuclear bodies of urban society, were not able to mature into perfectly autonomous entities. In the Tokugawa Period *kabu-nakama* were organized. These groups resembled the Western European guild, but they were strictly economic organizations and practically never served as organs through which municipal autonomy functioned. Thus in Japan the development of urban society could not help but be deformed.

The first thing which ought to be mentioned as among the conditions leading to this situation is that there was an insufficient development of commerce and industry. Since the scope of commercial and industrial activity was narrow and its scale small, the material base which would have permitted the traders and artisans to be independent of the protection and control of the feudal lords and would have allowed the cities to be self-governing was unable to expand beyond a fixed limit. In Western Europe during the Middle Ages, commerce could be conducted throughout all of Europe since at that time Europe was united into a single society by Christianity. If we compare this with the state of affairs in Japan, the point is easily understood. The next point to be born in mind is that the control of the feudal lord was almost absolute. This is especially true when after the Middle Ages the domanial economy centered around the feudal lord was formed. It is even truer when in the Tokugawa Period there appeared a nation-wide economy which included and transcended the domanial economies. Though the merchants and artisans matured and the cities developed, in their earlier stages they still required the protection of whoever had political control. This was true even in Europe. In Japan, however, there was the peculiar development that as cities reached the point where they were able to stand by their own power, control over them was strengthened and they were even subjected to

oppression. So traders and artisans were not given any opportunity for training and practice in urban social life.

In Japan urban social life could only develop in a deformed way within the frame of the feudal system. And of course there never arose a self-conscious recognition of social life. This is one important reason why the Meiji Restoration was not a revolution based upon urban society but was conducted as a democratic revolution from above. With the adoption of a capitalistic economic organization after the Meiji Restoration, it was expected that urban society would mature. But there was the traditional character of the city dwellers which I have just explained. There was, too, the governmental protection and interference which came from the necessity of quickly overcoming the backwardness of Japan's economy. Consequently, despite the speedy maturing of urban social life, that life was thought of only as playing a secondary role to national life. Thus, the so-called "discovery of society" had no native roots in Japan but was imported wholesale from the West. The development of urban society, after all, could not but be deformed.

## V. CONCLUSION

The structure of our national life, when considered historically, has down to this very day been of a family-like type. The influence of the urban social structure which existed in its midst has been weak. It has been the village which from beginning to end has played the basic role in this structure. Three conditions are thought of in connection with the fact that from its origin the village has continued to exist as a kinship-territorial-cooperative group. First, the inhabitants in the main depend upon intensive paddy culture for their livelihood and there has been no conspicuous progress in agricultural operations. Second, the village was utilized as the basic unit of political control. Even in the Tokugawa Period when there had been a fair amount of industrial and commercial development, the village, as the basis of existence, was the object of the feudal lord's exploitation and was repressed. Third, we have the topography of Japan. There is a mountain range which runs the length of Japan just like a spine. Parallel to it are several volcanic ranges. At right angles to these ranges flow many swift rivers. The whole country is divided by these mountains and rivers into innumerable small districts. These small districts were traditionally called *kuni* and the small societies which were organized in them were also styled *kuni*. The *kuni* was composed of many villages.

With these *kuni*, or with the villages as a basis, at one time manors were established; at another, a feudal society was constructed.<sup>11)</sup> In this kind of geographical environment frequent contacts between groups was not possible. This fact, together with the intensive paddy culture, caused each group to remain a kinship-territorial-cooperative group. On the other hand, in a paddy culture irrigation and water control are important problems. However, there were no undertakings in Japan on a scale comparable to the control, say, of the Yellow River (China). Consequently, there was no need for the appearance of the so called oriental type of absolute monarchy and naturally no gulf was created between the State and the people.

The Japanese feudal system, which was constructed upon the basis of a village community possessing the characteristics enumerated above, was itself a variation upon the primitive kinship group, the clan. Accordingly, the feudal system itself had a family-like structure. Moreover, as a result of the geographical conditions I have described, the feudal system was not merely a union based on the status relationship of ruler and subject or lord and vassal. The elements of the geographical region and of the feudal fief became intertwined, and the domanial state and domanial economy were established. Thus with the rise of the feudal system the family-like structure of Japan's national life became all the more manifest. In this connection, we must attach importance to the establishment of the feudal ideals of "selfless public service" (*messi-hōkō*) and "loyalty and patriotism" (*chūkun-aikoku*).

In appraising the feudal system from a historical standpoint, we must consider the role which it played in historical evolution rather than the question of whether it was good or bad. First, it resulted in the development of the concept of the "self" as opposed to the community. Thus it constituted a transitional stage from the primitive cooperative society which has no concept of the "self" to the modern urban society which is based upon consciousness of the "self".<sup>12)</sup> In connection with the development of a capitalist economy based on urban society, both as it has occurred in the West and in less advanced Japan, it must be borne in mind that every country definitely passed through a feudal stage.

However, in the case of Japan the feudal system was a manifes-

11) Dr. M. Takigawa; *Nippon Shakai-Keizaishi Ronkō* (Some Considerations upon Japanese Social and Economic History), 1939, pp.7-3.

12) Dr. T. Fukuda; *Kan-koku no Keizai-soshiki to Keizai-tan-i* (Economic Organization and Economic Unit in Korea). (Fukuda's Complete Works, vol. 4.)

tation of the traditional family-like structure of life. Once it had appeared, it strengthened the latter. Thereby it prevented the healthy maturing of urban society and caused the development of urban society to be deformed. Of course, we must not overlook the fact that as an island country Japan continued to be in a state of isolation. Contact with other nations was infrequent and before the Meiji Period the Japanese people entered into no life and death struggles with other peoples. The artificially imposed isolation of the Tokugawa Period precluded any foreign stimulus bringing about a change in Japan's way of life. Consequently, the traditional structure of national life and the ideals connected with that structure were maintained unchanged for a long time. Within these limits, the feudal system also was maintained for a long time and in the end extended its influence into every aspect of the national life.

The external condition, which permitted Japan to easily accomplish her unification as a modern state at the time of the Meiji Restoration, was the demand of the advanced capitalist nations for the modernization of Japan.<sup>3)</sup> The internal condition is thought to have been the above mentioned structure of national life. However, the fact that the democratic reform which was simultaneously effected was left incomplete is due to this structure of national life which had been strengthened by the feudal system. After the Meiji Restoration Japan, as opposed to other oriental countries, was able to modernize speedily not only in her economy but also in various cultural fields, albeit superficially. This was possible because under her traditional structure of national life the power of the whole people could be concentrated on the task. At the same time, however, the maintenance of this structure of life was both consciously and unconsciously desired. As a result, it was impossible in the process of modernization to sweep away the feudalistic elements which had penetrated into every corner of national life. Moreover, conditions of inequality became quite marked in every field.

Nevertheless, with the Meiji Restoration various feudalistic limitations were abolished. Although there was paternalistic and absolutist protection and interference, still with the development of a capitalist economy there also arose an urban social life incomparably greater than that of the previous period. Despite this, there was no cognizance of social life based upon this truth, no "discovery of society". It was

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<sup>13)</sup> Yasuzō Horie; *Nippon Shihonshugi no Seiritsu* (Rise of Modern Capitalism in Japan.) 1938. p.138.

still preached that *gesellschaft* relations were secondary to national life. There existed a contradiction between the actual development of *gesellschaft* relations and the idealistic strengthening of national life. To be more specific, there existed a contradiction between the traditional structure of national life, which with the development of *gesellschaft* relations entered upon a precipitous decline, and the political and educational policies which in spite of this decline tried to strengthen and support that traditional structure to the bitter end. By preventing the healthy development of *gesellschaft* relations, this contradiction was finally revealed. It first began to be felt right after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) when Japanese capitalism was going through its first great period of expansion. However, it was most conclusively exposed, of course, by the late war.